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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC.

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A SERMON,

BY

The Rev. Robert W. Hudgell,

(RECTOR OF S. PETER'S, DERBY.)

PREACHED BEFORE THE CHAPTER OF THE CHATHAM RURAL DEANERY, AND PRINTED BY REQUEST.

PRINTED AT THE "MIRAMICHI ADVANCE" OFFICE, CHATHAM, N. B.

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"UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH." *S. Matthew*
XVI. 18.

The Church of GOD is one, not many. As GOD is One and Holy even so GOD'S Church is One and Holy. The Faith taught in the One, Holy Church is complete and unchangeable to the end of time. It is really absurd to imagine the possibility of two supreme Gods, or two complete Faiths, or two Divine Churches. There cannot be more than one outward and visible Church. Her history runs parallel with the history of the world. The Church of GOD existed ages before the Incarnation of Our Blessed Lord. When Adam sinned GOD instituted His Spiritual Kingdom, the Church, as the medium through which and by which He dispensed pardon and grace to guilty man. The Church of GOD in the Christian dispensation is but the Church of GOD in succession from the ancient Jewish hierarchy. Through the long and weary ages of the past the Church reaches us to-day, and will continue upon the earth as the One, Holy, Divine Church until the glorious advent of Her Lord. The members of the Church of GOD, then, consist of all those who have been received into the same by the initiative rites of circumcision or holy baptism, and who have worshipped Almighty GOD, though imperfectly, under the three dispensations of Adam, Abraham, and Our Lord Jesus Christ. Before the Holy Incarnation of Our Lord the Church was *local* in its character, confined to the Jewish nation, but when Our Lord organised the Christian Church He made it *Catholic*. She is Catholic in being divinely adapted to the spiritual needs of the whole human race, and calling to Her sacred Fold every nation under Heaven. The Catholic commission given to the holy Apostles was: "Going, therefore, make ye disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of Father, and of Son, and of Holy Ghost." It is this divinely-commissioned, Catholic, Apostolic, Baptised Church which is the Church of GOD under the Christian dispensation. No other institution of merely human and modern origin can ever be the Divine Church. The Church exists to-day scattered throughout the nations of the world. She is, therefore, Catholic, and that is the reason why Her Children continually confess at the altar of GOD: "I believe in One, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." The

Church, then, exists to-day in three great parts, each part holding firmly and reverently the One, undivided Faith.

The Greek Church is the Divine Church in the East, chiefly in Eastern Europe, and upon the Asiatic continent.

The English Church is the Divine Church in the West, chiefly in England, in the British Colonies, and in America.

The Latin Church is the Divine Church in the West, chiefly upon the European Continent, and in America.

The Bishop of Constantinople is Patriarch of the Greek Church.

The Bishop of Canterbury is Patriarch or Archbishop of the English Church.

The Bishop of Rome is Patriarch or Pope of the Latin Church.

No Bishop, mark you, is above another in the Church of GOD. All are equal in spiritual authority in the Church. Their jurisdiction does not extend beyond their own dioceses, but there has always been a *primus inter pares*, a first among equals, a Metropolitan, a Chairman of the House of Bishops, as we might say, as in the case of S. James, the Less, who presided over the first synod of the Church, in Jerusalem, in the year of grace, 52; S. Linus, who was the first Bishop of Rome after the holy Apostles, or of the Bishops in our own day who occupy the episcopal sees of Constantinople, Canterbury and Rome, who are now the chief rulers of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. These three parts of the One Holy Church of Christ are plainly distinguished by having Bishops, Priests and Deacons, a sacred threefold order, who have been ordained in a regular succession from the Apostles down to the present day. But the Divine Foundation of the English branch of the Church has been called in question by the Latin portion, and yet a reverent and careful study of Church history and of the writings of the Apostolic and Ancient Fathers of the Church, will prove beyond the shadow of a doubt to every unprejudiced and sincere student, the Apostolic origin of the English Church equally with that of the Latin and the Greek. As a priest of the English Church it is my humble desire to point out the Apostolic origin and Catholic heritage of the Holy Church of England, and to mark how careful our forefathers were to preserve Apostolic order and primitive worship. An altogether erroneous opinion has got abroad that the English Church is but the outcome of the semi-political, semi-religious Reformation of

the sixteenth century. It is commonly supposed that England and England's Holy Church was entirely Latin or Roman Catholic until that period, and that there had never existed in England the Apostolic Church except the Latin or Roman part of it, and the English Church is supposed to have had no separate existence till the Reformation, when She was founded by the profligate, godless King, Henry VIII. Now this fictitious history is not fact. It may be stated in some historical books in our public schools, but that does not prevent it from being a gross libel, or a piece of surprising ignorance. No student of history—ecclesiastical or profane—can ever consistently believe it. For the first thing that meets us in beginning the study of the Divine founding of the Church, as given in the acts of the Holy Apostles, is to find the Apostolic Church one in Faith; one in Discipline; one in Fellowship; one in Sacraments. That Faith, that Discipline, that Fellowship, those Holy Sacraments the Church of England has kept undefiled from the first. The Apostles taught that the essence of the religious life consists in the objective worship of the Ever-blessed Trinity, and not merely in preaching and hearing religious truths apart from a life of devout worship. The Christian Church was founded on the Day of Pentecost—Whitsunday—in the city of Jerusalem. At the first synod, S. James, the Less, the first bishop of Jerusalem, was appointed to preside. Remember this. It was not S. Peter who had the place of honour in the first Church council, it was S. James, the Less. Indeed, we do not find that S. Peter ever appeared to have had, or to have asserted any superiority or authority over his brother Apostles. From Jerusalem the Church extended Her borders through Asia Minor, and from thence reached the European Continent through the ministry of the Apostles, but chiefly of S. Paul. We are told but little in the Holy Scriptures as to the particulars of the Apostles' work in extending the Church of GOD, but we learn from many sources that the Apostles visited almost every known country in the world, and ancient Fathers tell us that S. Paul visited Spain and Britain. Be that as it may, we know that there was commercial intercourse between ancient Rome and ancient Britain, and by this means, if by no other, Almighty GOD mercifully ordained that the doctrine of the Apostle was carried to Britain, if not personally proclaimed by him. Suffice it to say, that the Church was founded in ancient Britain in Apostolic days, and took deep root in the virgin soil. In com-

mon with other national churches the British Church maintained Her independence of the Church of Rome for more than five centuries. She derived her succession, not from the Church of Rome, but from the Church of Ephesus, through the bishops of Arles and Lyons, in Gaul, who had come from the Asiatic Church. We read of the Church in Britain contending earnestly for the Faith once delivered, and of S. Alban, Britain's proto-martyr perishing amidst burning faggots, in the year of grace 303, on the spot where St. Alban's Abbey now stands as a living monument of the Apostolic British Church. If, as is stated, there was no ancient British Church till S. Augustine's mission in 597, how comes it to pass that as early as 314 three bishops of the Church in Britain—the bishops of York, Lincoln and London—were present at a council held in Arles, in Gaul? It is important to remember this for it points out to us the high esteem in which the prelates of the early Church were held, and of the inter-communion existing between the Church in Gaul and the Church in Britain in those days. It is necessary for us always to remember that the holy Orders of the Anglo-Catholic Church come in the first place through the Church of Gaul, and only secondarily through the Church of Rome. Even S. Augustine, although a priest of the Roman Church, was consecrated to the archbishopric of Canterbury by a Gallican bishop, and Pope S. Gregory, that holy and worthy bishop, who sent S. Augustine upon his mission, denied the papal supremacy, and when Augustine wrote to his Holiness to ascertain whether he wished him to use the liturgy of S. Peter, which was the Roman liturgy, and the one Augustine was familiar with, or whether he should continue to use the liturgy of S. John, which he found in use in the British Church when he arrived, S. Gregory replied ordering him to make selection from the ancient British liturgy. How, then, can we say that there was no Apostolic Church till S. Augustine arrived? With stern facts such as these upon the surface of the Church's history in Britain, how can we delude ourselves with the strange error that the Holy Church of England is a mere sect founded in modern times by King Henry VIII., that wicked, profligate, blood-thirsty monarch; or that it was founded by some good-meaning, but misguided men at the time of the Reformation. That would take away our right to be called the Church of England. That would make us a merely human institution existing for moral and religious reform, with no more authority than a

self-organised temperance society or a working men's club. We could not then come to you as Christ's ambassadors and beseech you in Christ's stead if Christ had not commissioned us, but we came of our own accord. If the English Church were not a true and living part of the One, Divine Church which Christ hath purchased with His most precious blood, then we should have no right to call ourselves Catholic as we do in every public service; then we should be no churchmen at all; then we should only be the "episcopal" sect; then our clergy would be no clergy; and you, my brethren of the laity, would have as good a right and equal authority to preach the word of GOD, and administer the Holy Sacraments as any self-constituted clergyman of the Church of England Institution! But it is *not* so. GOD'S triune name be praised for ever! It is *not* so. The very Church of England to which we belong originated not in any human mind, but in the council-chamber of Heaven. The Church was founded by none other than the GOD-Man, our Holy Saviour, before Whom, I trust, we prostrate ourselves in lowly awe and adoration. By a succession of Godly bishops we trace our origin back to Christ and His Apostles. S. Linus was ordained to the Christian priesthood by S.S. Peter and Paul, and became the first bishop of Rome. Eusebius, the learned ecclesiastical historian of the Primitive Church in the 2nd century, traces the Apostolical succession from S. Linus onward to his own day. Then we have it continued from Eusebius to Gregory the Great, who sent S. Augustine to Christianize that part of England which had lapsed into Anglo-Saxon paganism, and he became Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 597; then the succession proceeded along through the medieval period down to the consecration of Archbishop Parker on Sunday, December 17th, 1559, in the archi-episcopal Palace, at Lambeth, London, when the Apostolic hands of Wm. Barlowe, Bishop of Bath; John Scorey, Bishop-elect of Hereford; Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter; and John Hodgkin, Bishop-suffragan of Bedford, were reverently laid upon his bending head. The service of consecration began at 6 a. m. Prayers were chanted by Pearson. The sermon was preached by Scorey, Bishop-elect of Hereford, and on January the 1st, 1560, Archbishop Parker was enthroned. The succession then continues onward until it reaches our present Archbishop of Canterbury—the Right Rev. Edward White Benson, D. D., who was translated from the bishopric of Truro to that of Canterbury in the year 1883. And the ordin-

ation and license by an apostolic bishop are the spiritual right and legal authority by which every priest and deacon in the Church of England presumes to minister in holy things in the sanctuary of Prayer, and to plead with sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto GOD. And because the English Church is a part of the Church of GOD founded by the Son of GOD, the Lord Jesus Christ, and because the English Church has kept inviolate the Catholic, Apostolic Faith once delivered to the Saints; and because the English Church has retained the manner of worship practiced by the Apostles and early Christians; and because the English Church has still the usages and forms of the primitive Church; and because our Lord has placed pardon and grace, and the promise of eternal life within His Holy Church, for these and many other reasons we are found to-day members of the One, Holy Catholic Church of Christ on earth. When once we have seriously grasped this truth we cannot join ourselves to any religious society however good and earnest its members may be in themselves, unless that society can prove by unquestionable credentials, and by a living history, that it is divine in its foundation, Apostolic in its teaching, and tracing its beginning from our Lord and His Apostles. Since Jesus Christ has founded the Church which He expressly calls "My Church," and has built His Church upon the Holy Apostles and Prophets, He Himself being the chief cornerstone, to that Church in one of Her three great parts we should, of course, belong, if we desire to follow Him Whom our souls adore in the full obedience of submission to His Divine will and commandments. It is not, my brethren, that the Catholic churchman questions for one moment the sincerity of many of those who do not belong to the Divine Apostolic Church. GOD forbid. Charity never faileth. It beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things. We know from experience and observation that Almighty GOD in the plenitude of His mercy, communicates spiritual blessings to those who earnestly seek them outside of Holy Church, but we must ever remember that if men who have left the Church's Holy Fold, or, perhaps, have been trained amongst the religious societies around us, receive spiritual grace and blessing without the Church's holy nurture, it is all to be ascribed to GOD'S infinitive mercy and love. It is GOD'S condescension to human weakness or ignorance of the truth, and it is no reason or argument for our disobedience or disloyalty to our Holy Mother

Church. If by the laver of regeneration you have been made members of Christ, children of GOD, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet you still neglect the Holy Sacraments and services of the church, and foolishly think that you can get more spiritual good elsewhere, you are surely making a sad mistake; your folly and presumption have reached a most distressing degree, for you are simply running away from the ordinary and divinely-appointed channel of grace and blessing. Because others may receive spiritual blessings outside of GOD'S appointed and ordinary channel of dispensing grace through His church, let us rather thank GOD for His great mercy, although we may weep bitter tears because many,—amongst whom are some of our dearest friends,—are not safely sheltered and lovingly trained within the Holy Fold where all spiritual graces abound. Oh, let us never cease to offer daily the prayer taught our infant lips by our English branch of the Church. "For the good estate of the Catholic Church; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."

Such, then, in very brief outline, is the history suggested by those two words of our Lord's "My Church;" and by studying the history of the Church we discover the reasons why every disciple of Christ should belong to the Catholic Church, and all English-speaking Christians to the English portion of the Church. We shall do well to remember that when we were baptised we were *not* received into any particular portion of the "congregation of Christ's flock," that is to say, we were not simply made members of the Church of England, in the sectarian sense, but we were baptised into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which the three portions,—the Greek, the English and the Latin,—in union with the True Vine, form the whole congregation.

"Like a mighty army
 Moves the Church of GOD;
 Brothers we are treading
 Where the Saints have trod;
 We are not divided,
 All one body we,
 One in hope and doctrine,
 One in charity."

Remember this, oh my brethren, in these modern days of a divided Christendom; in order that you may answer intelligently the objector and the scoffer; in order that you, henceforth, be no more children, tossed to and fro upon a sea of uncertainty at the mercy of every change of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; in order that you may learn yet more and more to love the Holy Church, and to live and die within Her Sacred Fold.

"Soft peace She brings, wherever She arrives

"She builds our quiet, as She forms our lives;

"Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,

"And opens in each breast a little Heaven."

Oh, never forget your glorious Catholic heritage. You are members of the Church of the Living GOD. The Holy Church for which the Apostles laboured, and the Godly Martyrs ebb'd out their lives' precious blood. The Church of the ages. The Church of numberless Saints and Virgins who rest from their labours. The Church of Kings and Queens of England down to our own beloved lady, Queen Victoria. The Church descending to us from the ancient British Church of the 1st century,—the grand, old, historic Church of England.

Remember *this* when the enemies of the English Church would villify and misrepresent Her Catholic and Apostolic character. Remember *this* when other and strange voices tempt you to despise Her Holy Sacraments or to leave Her Sacred Fold.

Remember *this* when you are told apparently in good earnest that the English Church is but a sect of merely human origin which sprang up at the time of the Reformation. Remember *this* when it is said that it does not matter what you are, or where you go to, so long as you are as good as other people.

Ah, my brethren, men speak thus for want of careful investigation; and because, alas, in the present day people prefer an easy religion which calls forth no real act of self-denial from them, and which too often means a worldly spirit through the days of the week, and Sunday entertainment in the form of a good sermon or some good music, whilst there is an entire absence of devotion; and the desire to worship GOD in the beauty of holiness within His Temple is far removed from their minds and hearts; and it is *this* sort of so-called religion, without devotion, which the Catholic Churchman must ever solemnly protest against. There is abroad in the world to-day a religious senti-

ment which is taking the place of a religious life ; a goody-goody sentiment, a mere figment, which is taking the place of the Holy Catholic Faith of Christ. There are thousands of persons, calling themselves christians, who know practically nothing of the principles that must govern the christian life ; their only conception of the religious life is to spend an hour at the most on Sunday in sacred entertainment. Every Catholic Christian must solemnly protest against this subjective view of our holy religion.

May these meditations lead us all—priests and people—to be more devout and practical in our religious life, and more constant and faithful to the Holy Church of GOD. May we be more strict in our observance of the rules and discipline of our Holy Mother ; and especially drawn by the love of Christ to commune with Him in the early Eucharistic worship.

May these meditations intensify our devotion, purify our affections ; ennoble our natures ; deepen our charity ; strengthen our catholicity ; spiritualize our desires ; increase our faith ; brighten our hopes, and lead us to appreciate more and more the Holy Catholic Church, and especially that portion of it called the Church of England ; and, above all other considerations, may these thoughts advance the parting prayer of the Great Head of the Church : "That all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ; *that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me.*" Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE UNITY OF CHRISTENDOM.

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace ; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions, take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord : that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father for us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may with one mind and mouth glorify Thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.